United Nations

Report of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives

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Contents

Chapter		*Paragraphs*	*Page*
I.	Introduction	1–3	1
II.	Organizational matters	4–15	1
	A. Opening and duration of the session	4–6	1
	B. Attendance	7–11	1
	C. Officers	12–13	2
	D. Agenda	14	2
	E. Documentation	15	2
III.	Arrangements for the preparatory process and the special session: preparations for the special session; participation of non-governmental organizations; arrangements for future sessions of the Preparatory Committee	16–80	3
IV.	Provisional agenda for the first session of the Preparatory Committee	81–82	12
V.	Adoption of the report of the Preparatory Committee on its organizational session	83–86	12
VI.	Matters calling for action by the General Assembly or brought to its attention	87–88	13
	A. Draft decision for adoption by the General Assembly	87	13
	B. Decisions adopted by the Preparatory Committee	88	14

Chapter I
Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in paragraph 24 of its resolution 50/161 of 22 December 1995, decided to hold a special session in the year 2000 for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and to consider further actions and initiatives.

2. In paragraph 46 of its resolution 51/202 of 17 December 1996, the General Assembly further decided on the organization of the preparatory process of the special session.

3. In paragraphs 51 and 52 of its resolution 52/25 of 26 November 1997, the General Assembly decided to establish a Preparatory Committee in order to consider and decide on the process to be followed to achieve the purpose of the special session. The Assembly also decided that the organizational session of the Preparatory Committee would be held from 19 to 22 May 1998.

Chapter II
Organizational matters

A. Opening and duration of the session

4. The Preparatory Committee held its organizational session at United Nations Headquarters from 19 to 22 May 1998. The Committee held 6 meetings (1st to 6th) and a number of informal meetings.

5. The session was opened by the Vice-President of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, Mr. Christos Zacharakis (Greece).

6. At the 1st meeting, on 19 May, the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee made an introductory statement.

B. Attendance

7. The following States were represented: Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Holy See, Honduras, Hungary, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Netherlands, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sudan, Suriname, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

8. The observer for Palestine attended the session.

9. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat were represented.

10. The following specialized agencies were represented: International Labour Organization, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Health Organization, International Monetary Fund, World Meteorological Organization and United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

11. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented: Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee, European Union, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, League of Arab States, Organization of African Unity and Organization of the Islamic Conference.

C. Officers

12. At the 1st and 4th meetings, on 19 and 20 May 1998, the Preparatory Committee elected the following officers by acclamation:

Chairman: Cristian Maquieira (Chile)

Vice-Chairmen: Bagher Asadi (Islamic Republic of Iran)
Abdallah Baali (Algeria)
Ion Gorita (Romania)
Koos Richelle (Netherlands)

Ex officio: Aurelio Fernandez (Spain)

13. At the 6th meeting, on 22 May, the Preparatory Committee designated Bagher Asadi (Islamic Republic of Iran) Vice-Chairman with rapporteurial responsibilities.

D. Agenda

14. At the 1st meeting, on 19 May 1998, the Preparatory Committee adopted the provisional agenda contained in document A/AC.253/1. The agenda was as follows:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Preparations for the special session.
4. Participation of non-governmental organizations.
5. Arrangements for future sessions of the Preparatory Committee.
6. Provisional agenda for the first session of the Preparatory Committee.
7. Adoption of the report of the Preparatory Committee on its organizational session.

E. Documentation

15. The Preparatory Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Provisional agenda for the session (A/AC.253/1);

(b) Note by the Secretariat containing proposals on the participation of non-governmental organizations at the special session and in its preparatory process (A/AC.253/2);

(c) Report of the Secretary-General containing proposals on the preparatory process of the special session (A/AC.253/3);

(d) Letter dated 8 May 1998 from the Permanent Observer for Switzerland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, containing a proposal to hold the special session in Geneva (A/AC.253/4);

(e) Report of the Commission for Social Development on its special session (E/1996/29);[1]

(f) Report of the Commission for Social Development on its thirty-fifth session (E/1997/26);[2]

(g) Report of the Commission for Social Development on its thirty-sixth session (E/1998/26).[3]

Chapter III
Arrangements for the preparatory process and the special session: preparations for the special session; participation of non-governmental organizations; arrangements for future sessions of the Preparatory Committee

16. The Preparatory Committee considered agenda items 3, 4 and 5 at its 1st to 6th meetings, from 19 to 22 May 1998.

17. The Preparatory Committee held a general discussion on the items at its 1st to 5th meetings, from 19 to 21 May.

18. At the 1st meeting, on 19 May, the Chairman of the Commission for Social Development made a statement.

19. At the same meeting, the Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs made an introductory statement.

20. Also at the 1st meeting, statements were made under agenda item 3 by the representatives of Switzerland, Indonesia (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China), the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Norther Ireland (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union) and Belarus.

21. The Secretary of the Preparatory Committee made a statement on arrangements for the special session.

22. At the 2nd meeting, on 19 May, the Preparatory Committee held a panel discussion, followed by a dialogue with the panellists in which the following delegations participated: Denmark, Honduras, Jamaica, Netherlands, Pakistan, Sudan, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Zambia.

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[1] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1996, Supplement No. 9* (E/1996/29).

[2] Ibid., *1997, Supplement No. 6* (E/1997/26).

[3] Ibid., *1998, Supplement No. 6* (E/1998/26).

23. At the 3rd meeting, on 20 May, statements were made under agenda item 3 by the representatives of Venezuela, Kazakhstan, Japan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Turkey and Cuba.

24. At the 4th meeting, on 20 May, the Preparatory Committee held a panel discussion.

25. At the same meeting, the representative of the United States of America made a statement.

26. At the 5th meeting, on 21 May, statements were made under agenda item 3 by the representatives of Ecuador, the Russian Federation, the United States of America, Peru, the Republic of Korea and Algeria.

27. The representative of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia also made a statement.

28. At the same meeting, statements were made under agenda item 4 by the representatives of the United States of America, Canada, Egypt, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Algeria, Indonesia, Norway, China, the Republic of Korea, the Sudan and Solomon Islands. The Chairman of the Preparatory Committee also made a statement.

29. At the 6th meeting, on 22 May, the President of the Economic and Social Council, Mr. Juan Somovía (Chile), addressed the Preparatory Committee.

Summaries of panel discussions by the Chairman

Panel discussion I

30. At the 2nd meeting, on 19 May, the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives held a panel discussion on the contribution of the United Nations system to the implementation of the outcome of the Summit.

31. Mr. Nitin Desai, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs; Ms. Katherine Hagen, Deputy Director-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO); Ms. Eimi Watanabe, Assistant Administrator and Director of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); and Ms. Joanne Salop, Director, Operational Policy and Strategy, World Bank, made presentations. Mr. Cristian Maquieira (Chile), Chairman of the Committee, acted as moderator.

32. Following their presentations, the panellists participated in an exchange of views with the Preparatory Committee.

United Nations system-wide follow-up to the Summit

33. The coordinated system-wide follow-up, especially at the country level, of the Summit, as well as of other major international conferences in the economic and social areas, was greatly assisted by the establishment of three Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) task forces (basic social services for all, full employment and sustainable livelihoods, and enabling environment for economic and social development).

34. The task forces also helped to identify the types of operational tools needed to assist the development effort. The lessons learned from country reviews conducted under the auspices of the task force on employment have been incorporated into a synthesis report and a set of guidelines for the use of Resident Coordinators in order to translate the Copenhagen commitments into practical policy initiatives and actions that would improve the possibilities for employment. National experiences and lessons learned will be assessed

at regional seminars and an international consultation will be organized by ILO in November 1999.

35. The task forces provided a mechanism for bringing together all relevant actors of the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions.

36. The United Nations has also taken steps to mobilize action at the regional and country levels. At the regional level, follow-up meetings to the Summit were convened in Asia and Latin America. A regional review meeting will be held in Africa. At the national level, Governments have been encouraged to formulate national poverty eradication strategies and should be encouraged to report on progress in achieving the goals established at Copenhagen. Identification of existing constraints at the country level and the sharing of information would greatly assist monitoring and implementation.

37. While there has been progress at the global level, there is still room for improvement in inter-agency coordination at the country level. Mobilizing political will to translate the Summit commitments into action is also essential.

The role of values in policy formulation

38. One of the achievements of the Summit was to recognize human beings as the main actors and beneficiaries of the development process. People should be given opportunities to full participation in development activities and to a fair distribution of their fruits. Economic growth and free markets are necessary but not sufficient conditions for the fulfilment of people's potentials and aspirations. Shared values have a growing importance in the shaping of policies, attitudes and an enabling environment for social development. Solidarity and the obligation to assist those in need are examples of such values. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the most comprehensive expression of the fundamental values endorsed by the international community. There is, however, a need for more conceptual work and dialogue on shared values and their translation into action. For instance, there is a great deal of cross-linking between the promotion and enjoyment of human rights and social development. But a "rights-based" approach to development still has many unanswered questions. Among the rights reflecting shared values, and whose promotion is being actively pursued, are the core labour rights. It was noted that the international community had shown a deep commitment to eliminate intolerable forms of child labour, and progress has been achieved in this regard.

Indicators

39. Key to an assessment of the implementation of the Summit goals is the availability of basic indicators at the national and international levels. The ACC task force on basic social services produced a comprehensive chart featuring indicators in this area. The Statistical Commission has recently proposed a minimum data set on social indicators, and work is progressing on assessing the availability and quality of data. Given that several institutions are engaged in data collection and dissemination, it is necessary to clarify distinct concepts and methodologies that are used and, to the extent possible, reconcile unnecessary differences. Additional efforts should be made to develop a coherent set of indicators as soon as possible.

Social capital

40. Lack of, or underdeveloped, social capital was identified as a major inhibitor of development. Social capital reflected not only the quality of a given country's labour force (which can be expressed in terms of its productivity, level of education and health and so on) but also the network of values and institutions that govern relations among people.

Possible approaches to develop social capital would include the promotion of increased access to basic social services. Education is important: literacy and numeracy are essential but not enough; the education system should promote the full exercise of citizenship by individuals and their enjoyment of their rights, including meaningful participation in decision-making. Social capital may be compromised when rapid modernization and urbanization undermine traditional institutions. Tolerance needs to be promoted and fully embraced to end civil and ethnic conflict.

Integrated approach to poverty eradication

41. Despite considerable progress in integrating the social dimension into economic policy, several participants felt that there was a need to promote better integration of all aspects of development (social, environmental, economic, etc.) in the analysis and formulation of policies for poverty eradication. It was noted, for instance, that the environmental dimension of poverty was not given due consideration. Increased dialogue between the Commission for Social Development and the Commission for Sustainable Development was suggested as a means to bridge this gap. Additional efforts to address both environmental and poverty issues were required. Furthermore, it was noted that knowledge obtained through poverty assessments and similar exercises are not adequately incorporated in the formulation of macroeconomic policies, therefore missing an important opportunity to avoid the potential negative impact of such policies on the incidence of poverty. It was suggested that particular attention should be paid to structural adjustment programmes and their implication for poverty eradication.

Participation and right to information

42. Wider participation of civil society and non-governmental organizations in the implementation and follow-up to the Summit is essential. It was noted that although the Summit promoted a strong message of equity and partnership, it has not attracted as much support from civil society as the Earth summit and the Women's Conference. There is a need to actively involve the private sector in the implementation process both at the national and at the international levels, particularly now that the idea of social responsibility of business is increasingly being promoted. Additionally, it is especially important to involve young people who would carry the development agenda for the next century. All forms of participatory development should be encouraged.

43. Increased participation can be fostered by increasing people's access to the decision-making process, when they are duly informed about government actions and decisions and when government actions are transparent. Another aspect of the right to information refers to technological development. Measures should be taken to ensure that the least developed countries have full access and benefit from technological progress.

Emerging policy challenges and constraints

44. Increased economic integration among countries has created economic opportunities but also new challenges to be addressed. The recent crisis in Asia highlighted the fact that economic growth and globalization do not ensure steady progress and may also produce additional vulnerabilities and a threat to progress already achieved. Rapid liberalization of capital flows, combined with the volatile behaviour of short-term private capital flows, and inadequate supervision of financial markets have undermined the impressive progress countries achieved over the past years. Productive jobs vanished. In countries where social protection mechanisms are incipient or undeveloped this can have devastating consequences for the welfare of those affected, thus triggering social unrest and political instability.

Elsewhere, in Europe, the introduction of the new currency, the Euro, raises new policy questions.

45. Globalization and macroeconomic policy convergence reduce the degrees of liberty available to Governments in addressing particular social problems as they impose rigid targets on public expenditures and limit the possibilities of counter-cyclical fiscal deficit. But perhaps one of the most worrying negative consequences of globalization is the increase in equality within and across countries which makes it more difficult for countries and individuals to engage in frank dialogue on measures to enhance people's welfare.

The external debt of poor countries

46. Despite recent progress of the international debt initiative, the external debt situation of poor countries still seriously constrains the development prospects of poor countries. For several of the heavily indebted poor countries the share of government revenues that is devoted to debt servicing is larger than the education and health budget combined. Debt forgiveness needs to be accelerated. There is also the need to introduce more flexibility in the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative because the strategy, as currently designed, fails to address short-term problems. The six-year period, during which a country has to adhere to an International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme before debt relief can be granted, is considered far too long.

Structural adjustment programmes

47. Attention should be given to review the design and implementation of structural adjustment programmes so as to assess progress in terms of their contribution to the implementation of the goals and principles established at Copenhagen. Emphasis should be given to the evaluation of the impact of those programmes on poverty eradication and alleviation. Aspects that deserve attention refer to, among others, the possible changes in social expenditure, issues of access to basic social services given the restructuring of the delivery and financing of those services and the distribution of the costs and rewards of such programmes.

Promotion of full employment: some achievements

48. Higher levels of employment growth, including improvements in the quality of employment generated, are considered crucial preconditions for the eradication of poverty and the promotion of social integration. Moreover, productive and freely chosen employment empowers people by allowing them to provide for themselves. The importance of micro-credit to the generation of employment, particularly for the poor, should be taken into account.

49. There is now an increasing awareness of the strategic importance of attaining the goal of full, productive and freely chosen employment. Employment promotion is increasingly being perceived as an effective means to promote a more equitable distribution.

50. Significant progress has also been made in the observance of core international labour standards, particularly in the elimination of the most exploitative forms of child labour.

Panel discussion II

51. At the 4th meeting, on 20 May, the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives held a panel discussion on the implementation of the outcome of the Summit.

52. Mr. Jacques Baudot, Secretary of Copenhagen Seminars, Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and former Coordinator of the World Summit for Social Development; Mr. Julian Disney, President of the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW); Ms. Faith Innerarity, Director of the Jamaican Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Sport; and Ms. Salma Khan, Director-General of the Bangladesh Institute of Management and Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, made presentations. Mr. Cristian Maquieira (Chile), Chairman of the Committee, acted as moderator.

A political culture for social progress

53. Social development must be understood not only as a multitude of sectoral measures, but also as a focus of well-being for individuals in society. The political culture representing the spirit of the age and the mind-set of the principal actors is paramount to social progress. Three aspects of a political culture may be considered conducive to social development: (a) the subordination of economic policies to social goals, (b) enriching the moral foundation of social progress and (c) diversifying the process of globalization.

54. While social goals may differ from one country to another, a concern for the well-being of the individual and the smooth functioning of society is shared by most cultures. Representing a universalist ideal, it is compatible with United Nations goals in the economic and social field, including those endorsed by the Social Summit. These are, *inter alia*, the fulfilment of material and spiritual needs, respect for fundamental human rights, including the indivisibility of all rights (civil, political, economic, social and cultural), and equity and social cohesion to create harmonious societies. Equality of opportunity in both work and income is an integral part of economic justice, as well as a social goal.

55. Economic policy has to be treated as a means to social goals, as an instrument to fulfil both material and spiritual needs. Economic policy should be assessed constantly with the use of multiple criteria, including the provision of an adequate income and greater opportunity to the maximum number of people. Economic policies do not have a value in themselves; they need to be assessed in relation to their contribution to social objectives.

56. While the subordination of economic policies to social objectives was seen to be difficult to achieve, it was not considered as necessary by all panellists. Particularly troublesome is the insufficient level of financial resources available to public institutions responsible for the provision of public goods. Yet the attainment of a proper mix of distributive and redistributive policies is important, because private initiative, although crucial, is not sufficient for the achievement of an equitable and prosperous society. But, as the example of some countries proves, there is no inherent contradiction between redistributive efforts and sound macroeconomic policies.

57. The need to enrich the moral foundations of social development was seen in connection with a model which would be modest, less materialistic and more open to the diversity of values and cultures. There is a need for a more open discussion on contemporary values, ideas, trends and policies – particularly in relation to the emerging global economic model. The United Nations can play a central role in a democratic debate on issues of ethics, politics and moral philosophy. Renewed forms of international cooperation are required in this field. This will lead to a positive relationship between universal goals, values and cultural diversity. There is a pressing need to debate, within the context of shared principles and objectives, the various conceptions of what constitutes a good life and a good society.

Impact of globalization

58. Globalization is a multifaceted process, facilitating contacts and communication between nations and peoples. The creation of global markets has both positive and negative elements. They facilitate the spread of an economic model based on the principles of a market economy, while mass advertising and the global media help shape human aspirations and perceptions of social values.

59. There is a need to diversify the process of globalization by challenging the emerging form of global capitalism and balancing it by other concepts universal in scope. The discourse on social progress in the United Nations is crucial; the United Nations should be the place where the various forms of globalization are debated. It is also desirable to promote actions in the intellectual, artistic and political spheres that provide a counterbalance to the ethos of the global economy.

60. The emerging form of global capitalism requires an objective review and analysis and a study of its costs and benefits so that appropriate responses can be developed to the new challenges posed. Social impact assessment studies should play a key role in this regard.

National and international efforts to implement decisions of the Summit

61. The World Summit for Social Development has both symbolic and practical importance for Member States. The commitments made in Copenhagen represent solemn pledges, which, though not legally binding, constitute strong ethical and moral imperatives. Many concrete tasks and measures need to be taken to improve the implementation of the Summit goals.

62. There is a clear need to enhance national capacities to monitor and evaluate the progress achieved in implementing the specific commitments of the Summit. The collection, evaluation and use of data should receive priority attention. For purposes of comparison and assessment, uniform national reporting systems, including both format and time schedules, should be developed. There is a need for specific performance indicators relating to the commitments of the Summit. In-depth evaluations may be required to carry out related case studies. Some issues to be investigated include rural/urban dichotomies; the role of the informal sector in employment, particularly youth employment; the importance of the micro-level approach; gender issues; and partnerships with civil society. Political will is essential but not sufficient to achieve the goals of the Summit. Enabling environments remain critical in this regard.

63. Apart from national efforts, regional cooperation is important for assessing progress in implementing Summit decisions. Regional conferences can play a big role in this respect. There is also a need for more effective collaboration between United Nations agencies and national Governments in achieving the goals of the Summit, including through the expansion of national capacities to monitor and evaluate the progress achieved, as well as the obstacles encountered.

Incidence of poverty

64. At the Summit there was a global commitment to eradicate poverty. Poverty levels remain alarmingly high: over 1 billion people live in impoverished conditions. Practical moves towards eradicating poverty are crucial. Approximately 30 per cent of the global workforce is unemployed or underemployed. The unemployment rate is very high in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia and is increasing in some developed countries. Poverty and unemployment are a distinct threat to social integration, manifested in ethnic conflicts, a

rising crime rate, drug use and violence in many countries around the world. There is consequently a pressing need to focus more closely on the critical issues of economic and social development, in particular employment promotion and raising incomes that would reduce the gap between poor and rich, and between developing and developed countries.

65. In the developing country context, the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh micro-credit model can be effective in reaching very poor groups in society. The model of advancing micro-credit to rural communities and individual borrowers has been replicated in positive fashion in many countries. It has been found particularly successful among women who otherwise would have no access to credit. Access to micro-credit, especially in remote rural areas, is an effective tool in enhancing socio-economic conditions and empowering poor communities and individuals. Studies have shown that Grameen borrowers not only increase their income, but also show greater than typical advances in nutrition, child survival, family planning, health, housing and sanitation. However, for the hard core or poorest of the poor in the least developed countries, micro-credit programmes are often not the answer, as the means of this group are so meagre that they cannot take up credit at the prevailing interest rate. Governments must institute special policies and programmes to ensure that the basic survival needs of this group are met. The needs of the "floating" populations such as the homeless, squatters, the rural indigent, urban slum dwellers and physically disabled people must be addressed through fundamental social welfare and rehabilitation programmes. Targeting of the poorest group is critically important, particularly in regions with the worst social conditions, such as South Asia.

66. Despite relatively robust growth achieved in some developing countries, poverty remains deeply entrenched, with major income disparities persisting. One focus should be on stemming rural to urban migration, with its adverse effects on poverty. The view was expressed that the character of poverty was changing: the poorest segment of the population in the future would not be the rural peasant, but the urban unskilled worker. While there were some social safety nets in the rural areas, the breakdown in value systems in urban areas worsened poverty.

67. Some specific measures advanced were (a) the development of a long-term strategy within the policy framework of Governments to reach the hard-core poor; (b) identification of female-headed households, particularly those suffering from a chronic food deficit; (c) enhancement of food-for-work/food-for-development strategies to reach the ultra poor; (d) empowerment of local communities and community-based organizations; and (e) concentration by non-governmental organizations on education, health, nutrition and sanitation, rather than on income-generation projects alone. Moreover, the private sector had to contribute more to the resolution of social problems. This would help to improve social cohesion and create a more conducive environment for business efficiency.

68. Amelioration of the status of women deserves particular attention. The view was expressed that Copenhagen did not mainstream gender issues sufficiently. Governments should focus on increasing the participation of women in the power structure at all levels of society in order to strengthen women's access to education, health and employment.

69. The opinion was expressed that a reorientation in viewing gender issues was required, since in some cases women were outperforming men in education and other areas. As the marginalization of male workers and men at risk was observed in some countries, there is a need to revisit the gender issue from a different standpoint, not simply focusing on women's problems as they relate to men, but also exploring the advantages and disadvantages for both sexes. There is also a need for micro-approaches involving communities and families as basic units of social organization, as well as the need to prioritize the social agenda.

Imperatives for the special session

70. The special session of the General Assembly in the year 2000 should focus on the assessment and enhancement of national, regional and global initiatives designed to implement the recommendations embodied in the Copenhagen Programme of Action. The special session itself should take concrete decisions and actions in relation to selected international initiatives. Even before the session, the process of assessment and encouragement should be fostered. There should be some concrete decisions put forward before the special session begins. It is unrealistic to go from the exploration of ideas to detailed decision-making at the same meeting. Proposing decisions early would allow Governments to examine and formulate positions ahead of time, while the discussion should focus on the most significant parts of the Summit's Programme of Action.

71. The priority issues for the special session, taking account of the core problems of poverty, unemployment and social exclusion, include strengthening the role of the Economic and Social Council, especially in relation to international economic issues affecting social development. Economic cooperation is a clear priority for action by the special session. Closer interactions should be established with the World Bank, IMF and the World Trade Organization (WTO). As far as the enabling environment is concerned, some possible priority issues relate to stabilizing financial markets through the introduction of mutually agreed taxes and regulatory regimes to reduce excessive volume and volatility in short-term international transactions; giving priority in future global trade negotiations to areas where greater freedom of trade would be of special importance to developing countries; developing a United Nations code of conduct for international business, based on the work done at the United Nations on the draft code of conduct for transnational corporations; adopting stricter international standards for national taxation in order to promote fairer, more efficient tax collection and minimize tax evasion; and achieving universal ratification of human rights treaties, especially the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

72. Unlike some other world conferences, the Social Summit does not have a vocal natural constituency. There is only a limited "people's movement" behind it, since the very poor and the homeless do not articulate their demands or grievances effectively. These groups are not directly represented in the United Nations system, but they do make themselves heard in the outside world through demonstrations and protests.

73. The special session, and the preparatory meetings, need to ensure the participation of high-level government officials, especially ministers. This will strengthen its chances for success, as well as enhance media visibility throughout the world. A *comité des sages*, or group of eminent persons, should be formed, with the mandate to propose key policy and practical recommendations for consideration by the Preparatory Committee.

Action taken by the Preparatory Committee

74. At the 5th meeting, on 21 May, the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, introduced a document (A/AC.253/L.1) containing seven draft decisions, submitted under agenda items 3, 4 and 5.

75. At the 6th meeting, on 22 May, the Preparatory Committee had before it an informal paper, containing revisions to document A/AC.253/L.1, as a result of informal consultations held under the chairmanship of the Vice-Chairman, Mr. Koos Richelle (Netherlands).

76. At the same meeting, the Preparatory Committee took the following action with respect to the draft decisions:

Draft decision I, entitled "Objectives of the special session", was adopted, as revised (see chap. VI, sect. B, decision 1);

Draft decision II, entitled "Issues to be addressed", was adopted, as revised (see chap. VI, sect. B, decision 2);

Draft decision III, entitled "Coordination with the Commission for Social Development", was adopted, as revised (see chap. VI, sect. B, decision 3);

Draft decision IV, entitled "Role of the United Nations system", was adopted, as revised (see chap. VI, sect. B, decision 4);

Draft decision VI, entitled "Mobilization of voluntary resources", was adopted (see chap. VI, sect. B, decision 5);

Draft decision VII, entitled "Arrangements for future sessions", was adopted, as revised (see chap. VI, sect. B, decision 6).

77. Also at the 6th meeting, the Vice-Chairman, Mr. Ion Gorita (Romania), informed the Preparatory Committee of revisions made to draft decision V, entitled "Participation of non-governmental organizations", as a result of informal consultations which he chaired.

78. At the same meeting, the Preparatory Committee adopted draft decision V, as orally revised (see chap. VI, sect. B, decision 7).

79. After the adoption of the draft decision, statements were made by the representatives of Zambia, Cuba and the Sudan.

80. Also at the 6th meeting, on the proposal of the Chairman, the Preparatory Committee decided to discuss other organizational matters at its next session (for the text of the decision, see chap. VI, sect. B, decision 8).

Chapter IV

Provisional agenda for the first session of the Preparatory Committee

81. At the 6th meeting, on 22 May, the Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs introduced the draft provisional agenda for the first session of the Preparatory Committee, as contained in a note by the Secretariat (A/AC.253/L.2).

82. At the same meeting, the Preparatory Committee approved the draft provisional agenda for its first session and recommended it to the General Assembly for adoption (see chap. VI, sect. A).

Chapter V

Adoption of the report of the Preparatory Committee on its organizational session

83. At the 6th meeting, on 22 May, Bagher Asadi (Islamic Republic of Iran), as Vice-Chairman with rapporteurial responsibilities, introduced the draft report of the Preparatory Committee on its organizational session (A/AC.253/L.3).

84. At the same meeting, following statements by the representatives of the Syrian Arab Republic, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and France, the Preparatory Committee adopted its draft report and entrusted the Vice-Chairman with its completion.

85. Also at the 6th meeting, the Chairman drew the attention of the Preparatory Committee to two informal papers containing his summaries of the panel discussions that had been held during the session. The texts were not negotiated by the Committee.

86. Following statements by the representatives of Cuba and the Sudan, the Preparatory Committee agreed to include the summaries in its final report (see chap. III, paras. 30-73).

Chapter VI

Matters calling for action by the General Assembly or brought to its attention

A. Draft decision for adoption by the General Assembly

87. The Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft decision:

Provisional agenda for the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives

The General Assembly approves the provisional agenda for the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives set out below.

1. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
2. Status of preparations for the special session.
3. Preliminary review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development.
4. Consideration of further actions and initiatives to implement the commitments made at the Summit.
5. Provisional agenda for the second session of the Preparatory Committee.
6. Adoption of the report of the Preparatory Committee on its first session.

Annotations

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 50/161 of 22 December 1995, decided to hold a special session of the Assembly in the year 2000 with two purposes: an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and the consideration of further actions and initiatives.

2. At the first session of the Preparatory Committee, the scope for review and appraisal will be limited. Structured requests for national reports will have been sent but responses will not have been completed nor will analysis be far advanced. On the basis of the information available, including in the United Nations system, it should, however, be possible for the Secretariat to provide a preliminary assessment of achievements in and constraints on the implementation of the commitments made in Copenhagen. This should provide a basis for the consideration of further actions and initiatives.

3. The principal subject for discussion will therefore be the identification of the specific issues and initiatives that Governments wish to have placed on the agenda of the special session. As at the Summit, discussion of the means of addressing those issues will relate to goals, strategies, policies and programmes at the national, regional and international levels.

4. The 10 commitments agreed at the Summit, as elaborated in the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, will provide the framework for discussion. Specific issues raised by delegations during the organizational session of the Preparatory Committee will be discussed by the Bureau and presented, in a structured manner, in a document to be distributed before the first session of the Committee. This would be based on proposals prepared by countries, background reports prepared by the appropriate entities of the United Nations system, the results of expert meetings and reports prepared by consultants on issues identified by countries for consideration, which will also be circulated to delegations.

B. Decisions adopted by the Preparatory Committee

88. The following decisions, adopted by the Preparatory Committee, are brought to the attention of the General Assembly:

Decision 1. Objectives of the special session

The Preparatory Committee, bearing in mind General Assembly resolutions 50/161 of 22 December 1995 and 52/25 of 26 November 1997, concerning the convening of a special session for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and to consider further actions and initiatives, decides that the main purposes of the special session will be:

(a) To reaffirm the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development[4] and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development,[5] agreed at the Summit, and not to renegotiate them;

(b) To identify progress made and constraints therein, as well as lessons learned, in the implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action of the Summit at the national, regional and international levels;

(c) To recommend concrete actions and initiatives to further efforts towards full and effective implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action of the Summit.

[4] *Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[5] Ibid., annex II.

Decision 2. Issues to be addressed

The Preparatory Committee:

(a) Underlines that its task, in accordance with relevant General Assembly decisions, is to review and appraise the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, on the basis of input provided by the Commission for Social Development, and to propose concrete actions and initiatives for further implementation of the Copenhagen commitments;

(b) Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the Preparatory Committee at its first substantive session a report focusing on the implementation of the ten commitments, including the three core issues, at the national, regional and international levels;

(c) Requests the Secretary-General to provide the Preparatory Committee and the special session with an up-to-date comprehensive assessment of global trends, through the *Report on the World Social Situation*, to be issued in time for the second substantive session of the Preparatory Committee, in the year 2000;

(d) Also requests the Secretary-General to submit to the Preparatory Committee at its second substantive session, in the year 2000, a comprehensive document assessing the overall level of implementation of the outcome of the Summit, including the identification of constraints, obstacles and successes and lessons learned, as well as recommendations on further actions and initiatives at the national and international levels, especially in the promotion of an enabling environment, in particular to strengthen the national capacity to implement the goals and commitments of the Summit.

Decision 3. Coordination with the Commission for Social Development

The Preparatory Committee, taking into account General Assembly resolution 51/202 of 17 December 1996, in which the Assembly decided that the Commission for Social Development, as the functional commission of the Economic and Social Council with primary responsibility for the follow-up and review of the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development[4] and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development,[5] will undertake work in the biennium 1999-2000 for the preparation of the special session, in accordance with its programme of work as set out in Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/7 of 22 July 1996:

(a) Recommends that the Commission for Social Development be entrusted with the responsibility of acting as the forum for national reporting, benefiting from a sharing of experiences gained and thus in 1999 and 2000 identifying areas where further initiatives are needed for consideration by the Preparatory Committee to discuss how these initiatives would further assist implementation, stressing the importance of national reporting which is on a voluntary basis;

(b) Requests the Secretary-General:

(i) To formulate, as soon as possible, general guidelines and a structure and common framework for national reporting on the progress made and obstacles encountered, drawing on information already provided by Governments and compiling all data available within and outside the United Nations system relevant to the implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action;

(ii) To invite Governments to provide information, preferably not later than October 1999, to assist the Secretary-General in the preparation of his report;

(iii) To assist Governments, at their request, in providing such information.

Decision 4. Role of the United Nations system

The Preparatory Committee, reaffirming that its substantive activities should take into account the results of other major United Nations conferences and contributions by other relevant organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations system in time for the respective substantive sessions of the Committee:

(a) Invites all relevant organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, to contribute to and be actively involved in the preparatory process and the special session by, *inter alia*, submitting proposals for further actions and initiatives;

(b) Also invites those bodies to report on their activities, including operational activities, in the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development[4] and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development;[5]

(c) Invites the regional commissions, within their mandates, and other relevant regional organizations, to identify and share best practices and lessons learned with respect to the implementation of the outcome of the Summit at the regional and subregional levels;

(d) Invites the funds and programmes, in particular the United Nations Development Programme, to report on the implementation of the Summit commitments, especially those aimed at the eradication of poverty, including on their assistance to countries, particularly in Africa and the least developed countries;

(e) Invites the International Labour Organization to contribute to the overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit, particularly relating to its activities to implement the Summit commitment on employment as part of promoting social development.

Decision 5. Mobilization of voluntary resources

The Preparatory Committee invites Governments to contribute to the Trust Fund for the Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development set up to support the participation of the least developed countries in the work of the Preparatory Committee and the special session and the organization of expert group meetings, seminars, symposia and workshops to be held by the Secretariat on issues of relevance to the special session, both of which would contribute to the consideration of such issues by the Preparatory Committee.

Decision 6. Arrangements for future sessions

The Preparatory Committee, taking into account the United Nations calendar of meetings for the years 1999 and 2000 and for the thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth sessions of the Commission for Social Development:

(a) Takes note with appreciation of the offer of the Government of Switzerland to convene the special session of the General Assembly on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and further initiatives in the year 2000 at the United Nations Office at Geneva; in this context, requests the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the practical implications of this offer, including all additional direct and indirect financial implications for the United Nations, in time for the Assembly to take a decision on the venue and date at its fifty-third session, in 1998, bearing in mind the need to consult Member States, as appropriate, in preparing the report;

(b) Decides to hold its first substantive session in New York from 17 to 28 May 1999 and its second session, also in New York, from 3 to 14 April 2000, for a period of ten working days each;

(c) Also decides that the special session will be held for a period of five working days in the year 2000 at a date to be determined at a later stage;

(d) Invites Member States to participate in the special session at the highest political level possible.

Decision 7. Participation of non-governmental organizations

The Preparatory Committee, reaffirming the importance of the participation of non-governmental organizations and the involvement of civil society in the implementation of and follow-up to the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development[4] and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development:[5]

(a) Decides that the work of the Preparatory Committee should be open to the participation of non-governmental organizations, which are accredited in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996 and decisions 1996/208 of 9 February 1996 and 1996/315 of 14 November 1996, in which the Council invited those non-governmental organizations that were accredited to major United Nations conferences and summits to attend sessions of the Commission for Social Development, provided that they had started the process of application for consultative status;

(b) Also decides that participation by non-governmental organizations at the special session will be guided by relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and will take into account the experience gained at the mid-decade review of the outcome of major United Nations conferences;

(c) Further decides that non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and on the Roster will be invited to participate in the meetings of the Preparatory Committee; in addition, other non-governmental organizations that were accredited to the World Summit for Social Development or other major United Nations conferences and summits will be invited to apply for accreditation to the Preparatory Committee; the Secretary-General is requested to provide to Member States, in a timely fashion, a list of the latter non-governmental organizations for review;

(d) Encourages Governments to include representatives of civil society in their national preparatory process, as well as in their delegations to the Preparatory Committee and the special session;

(e) Decides to defer consideration of the modalities for participation of non-governmental organizations in the special session until its next meeting.

Decision 8. Other organizational matters

The Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives decides to discuss other organizational matters at its next session.